The role of lighting stylist in conveying messages and stories in the movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh"

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ABSTRACT

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Lighting in film plays an important role in conveying messages through the atmosphere and emotions created, as well as directing the audience's focus on the objects or characters that want to be highlighted in each scene. By utilizing the right lighting techniques, directors and cinematographers can create a deep feel, strengthen the mood of the story, and emphasize important elements in the story. This research analyzes the role of lighting stylists in strengthening visual narratives and supporting storytelling in films. The type of research used is Descriptive Qualitative, which examines the facts and characteristics of the object of research, as well as the relationship between the variables involved. Primary data is obtained through interviews and direct documentation, while secondary data comes from related literature. This research focuses on the role of the gaffer and lighting crew in the film "Mencuri Raden Saleh", including the process of making a light floorplan, determining camera points, selecting types of lights, and coordinating with DOP to meet the needs of each scene. The lighting stylist acts as a communication bridge between the DOP and the lighting team. Good technical management and negotiation skills are essential, as lighting is an important part of the mise-en-scène that significantly affects the production budget.

1. Introduction

Film, as an audio-visual medium, is able to convey messages in various ways. Messages can be communicated directly through the dialog and acting of the actors, as well as through text in the background of the scene. Messages in films can also be conveyed through the clever use of shooting techniques and the proper utilization of lighting. The film is seen as an effective means of mass communication to reach a wide audience because it combines audio-visual elements. With its visual power, movies are able to portray many stories in a short duration (Asri et al., 2020).

Movies have always influenced and shaped society based on the messages behind them without ever going the other way. Movies consistently record the realities that grow and develop in society and then project them onto the screen. (Ida Bagus, 2019). Movies can be divided into two elements: narrative and cinematic. These two elements interact and balance each other to create an overall film that resonates and balances with the audience. Cinematic elements include mise en scene or various things in front of the camera, while narrative elements include plot and story. According to Pratista in Syadian and Oktiana, mise en scene itself consists of four main aspects, namely lighting, costumes and make-up, setting, and the movement of players (acting) (Syadian & Oktiana, 2021).

Lighting in movies plays an essential role in conveying messages through the atmosphere and emotions created. Lighting can also regulate the focus of the audience's gaze on the objects or

characters to be highlighted in each scene. By utilizing the proper lighting techniques, directors and cinematographers can create an immersive feel, strengthen the mood of the story, and emphasize important aspects of the narrative that they want to convey to the audience (Landau, 2014).

The gaffer in film production plays an essential role in creating visuals that match the vision of the director and cinematographer and is responsible for the lighting in the filmmaking process. The gaffer is the chief lighting technician (CLT) who leads the lighting department. The gaffer works closely with the DP (Director of Photography) to plan the light setups that will shape the visual look of the movie. The DP confirms the lighting concept and equipment to be used in the movie production. The gaffer is responsible for leading the lighting team in implementing the lighting according to the plan approved by the DP (Director of Photography). The gaffer and DP usually discuss the lighting for the actors on location. The DP consults with the gaffer on the lighting objectives to be achieved in a scene (Kris Malkiewicz, 2012).

Figure 1. Poster Mencuri Raden Saleh (IMDb, 2022).

The movie "Mencuri Raden Saleh" is a heist genre movie that is rarely found in Indonesia. Mencuri Raden Saleh is a film released in 2022, produced by Visinema Pictures and directed by Angga Dwimas Sasongko and screenwriter Hussein M. Atmojo. The movie tells the story of a grand theft committed by a group of young people who are experts in their respective fields. Their target is a historical painting in Indonesia. Not only did it happen in a fictional movie, and it seemed far-fetched, but it also turned out that the forgery of the painting itself happened in Indonesia. This news was published in one of the tempo magazines in 2012 entitled "The Maestro's Fake Painting" (Hamzah, 2023).

2. Method

The type of research conducted is descriptive qualitative, which is a form of research based on the facts and properties of the object under study. This research combines the relationship between the variables involved and then interprets it based on related theories and literature. The data used by researchers in this study comes from two main sources, namely primary data obtained through interviews and direct documentation with the object of research, as well as secondary data obtained from an overview of the agency, especially the gaffer and crew involved in the lighting function in the film "Mencuri Raden Saleh" (Setiawan Johan &, 2018). In the context of this research, the research subject refers to the crew of the movie "Stealing Raden Saleh" who also act as the data source in this research. Norman Hermansyah is the lighting director of Stealing Raden Saleh. To process data, researchers need to analyze the data that has been obtained. Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews and documentation by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, compiling into patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others (Rijali, 2019).

3. Result and Discussion

Results In this movie, Norman Hermansyah, as a gaffer, has an important role in ensuring all technical aspects of the production run smoothly, especially in terms of lighting. Although his central

role is to handle the technical side, a gaffer's responsibilities go far beyond that. He also needs to oversee the production as a whole to ensure every technical element is in line with the director's vision and the set storyline. A gaffer must have an in-depth understanding of the script or scenario given to him so that he can create the right atmosphere and mood through lighting. For example, he can interpret the emotions in a scene and translate them into the appropriate lighting type and intensity. Not just adjusting lighting techniques, but the gaffer also often has to rely on his creativity to create visual effects that support the story, perhaps even presenting unique and innovative lighting elements to strengthen the narrative. As such, gaffers play an integral role in bringing together the technical and artistic aspects of a film or television production.
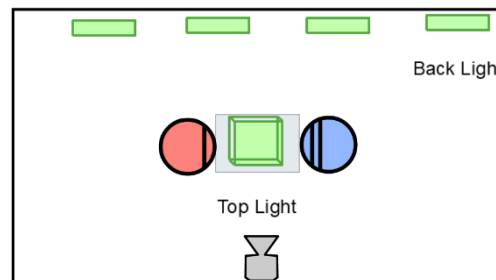

Figure 2. Floor Plan Scene Jail, Shot Designer.

Norman Hermansyah has a unique approach to lighting in Mencuri Raden Saleh, where he does not stick to traditional lighting techniques such as 3-point lighting consisting of key light, fill light, and backlight. Instead, he prefers to utilize elements such as locations, events, and spaces to create a more natural and authentic atmosphere. To him, movies are representations of real life, and therefore, lighting should support the authenticity of the atmosphere being displayed rather than simply following the basic rules of lighting. As seen in Figure 2, when it comes to creating contrast, Norman Hermansyah has a different approach. Usually focusing only on the primary light source or shadows, he applies contrast in three main aspects: background, foreground, and object. By organizing these three elements, he is able to create rich and dynamic visual layers, which not only strengthen the visual composition but also support the narrative of the story.

Figure 3. Scene of Piko and Budiman at the Prison, (Netflix, 2022).

In Figure 3, these three aspects can be processed to produce top contrast, which is the most prominent and most substantial level of comparison that can visually draw the audience's attention and emphasize essential elements in the scene. This approach shows that for Norman Hermansyah, lighting is not just about illuminating objects or actors but also about how the visual elements in a scene can interact to create an immersive and realistic atmosphere. As such, he manages to create a more contextual lighting style that is integrated with the environment and has a more substantial emotional impact on the audience.

The communication approach taken by a gaffer with the lighting team plays an essential role in maintaining efficiency and quality of work on the field. The gaffer provides detailed and thorough explanations to all team members without creating excessive pressure. This clear and calm explanation aims to ensure that each team member understands their tasks well while avoiding pressure that could hinder the lighting setup process. If the pressure is manageable, the team can stay focused, which ultimately results in a slower and more efficient setup process. In addition, the gaffer ensures that every member of the lighting team, from technicians to lighting stewards, receives a copy of the complete scenario. This is done so that the entire team has the same understanding of what they will

be dealing with so that they can prepare the right tools and work smoothly during set up. By sharing scenario information, the gaffer helps the team visualize the lighting needs in each scene so they can plan and set up equipment more effectively. This approach allows the entire team to work synergistically, minimizing confusion in the field and ensuring optimal lighting in line with the production vision.

4. Conclusion

Lighting is an essential element in filmmaking because, without the right light, the camera cannot record objects optimally. In movie production, cooperation is necessary, and good collaboration will facilitate the work process. A lighting artist needs to be sensitive and attentive to the surrounding environment because all elements can affect the concept of lighting design. In addition, light stylists must have a variety of references to facilitate the presentation of lighting concepts to cinematographers and directors. The collection of references can be a reference in developing ideas for each film to be made.

5. Acknowledgement

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